



FIELD CROPS

POTATO ACREAGE, PRODUCTION AND STOCKS

May 16, 2000

FLORIDA

SPRING: Growers in the Hastings area, who live in the counties of Flagler, Putnam, and St. Johns, expect to dig 5,100,000 hundredweight of potatoes this spring. Harvest acreage for the area is set at 17,000 acres, down 4,000 acres or 19 percent from the 21,000 acres dug a year ago. Yield is expected to average 300 hundredweight per acre, 30 hundredweight below last year’s yield of 330 hundredweight per acre. Producers in the Hastings area are reporting very good yields with both chipper and table stock being dug.

Spring crop production for other producers outside the Hastings area is expected to total 1,890,000 hundredweight equal to the 1999 production. Acreage to be dug is set at 7,000 acres, also equal to a year ago. Yield is expected to average 270 hundredweight per acre.

UNITED STATES

SPRING: Program changes for crop year 2000 combine Alabama spring production with the summer estimate and will be published in July. North Carolina combined their spring and

summer estimates into the spring forecast. Spring production is now forecast at 22.5 million cwt, down 11 percent from comparable totals last year but 7 percent above 1998. Harvest should be taken from an estimated 80,100 acres, down 5 percent from last year. The average yield is forecast at 281 cwt per acre, down 6 percent from last year’s comparable yield. The May 1 forecast is 5 percent higher than April.

Acreage in California was reduced 700 acres from the April 1 forecast to 18,800 acres, 1 percent below last year. The yield was boosted 15 cwt, resulting in a production forecast of 6.67 million cwt, a gain of 1 percent from a month ago. Output will be down 12 percent from last year. Weather conditions stabilized in April, as yield prospects increased to 355 cwt per acre. Harvest should start in early May and continue through June. Arizona’s acreage for harvest is forecast at 11,000 acres, up 15 percent from a year ago. Harvest is active. The average yield projection in Texas increased 10 cwt during April pushing production 4 percent above a month ago, however, production is 3 percent below last year. North Carolina’s former summer crop will be included in the spring season estimate this year. Combined production figures indicate a slight reduction from last year. Growing conditions have been ideal for most fields.

POTATOES

Seasonal group and State	Harvested		Yield per acre		Production		
	1999	2000	1999	2000	1998	1999	2000
			Cwt		1,000 cwt		
Spring							
Alabama ^{1/}	1.6	--	175	--	221	280	--
Arizona	9.6	11.0	315	290	2,268	3,024	3,190
California	19.0	18.8	400	355	6,198	7,600	6,674
Florida	28.0	24.0	315	291	7,358	8,820	6,990
Hastings	21.0	17.0	330	300	5,758	6,930	5,100
Other	7.0	7.0	270	270	1,600	1,890	1,890
North Carolina ^{2/}	16.5	17.0	200	200	3,325	3,300	3,400
Texas	9.8	9.3	235	240	1,751	2,303	2,232
Total	84.5	80.1	300	281	21,121	25,327	22,486

^{1/} Alabama spring potatoes combined with summer in 2000. ^{2/} North Carolina summer potatoes included with spring in 2000.

POTATO STOCKS DOWN 3 PERCENT

May 1, 2000 potato stocks totaled 85.7 million cwt, down 3 percent from a year ago and 8 percent below two years ago. Storage accounted for 20 percent of fall production, down 1 percentage point from a year ago.

Disappearance from the start of harvest to May 1 totaled 335 million cwt this season, down slightly from last year but 4 percent above two years ago. April disappearance of 41.9 million cwt was down 3 percent from last year but 1 percent above two years ago. Seasonal shrink and loss of 29.9 million cwt was up 2 percent from last year and 17 percent above two years ago.

Processing of 1999 crop potatoes this season totaled 163 million cwt, down 3 percent from the 1998 crop but 5 percent above the 1997 crop. In April, processors in the eight major States used 17.3 million cwt of potatoes, down 6 percent from last year and 2 percent below two years ago.

Eastern States stored 4.89 million cwt of potatoes on May 1, 2000, up 22 percent from a year ago and 2 percent above two

years ago. Maine's holdings were up 16 percent, Pennsylvania’s were up 3.5 times last year, while New York’s stocks were off 47 percent from last year.

Central States accounted for 12.0 million cwt of potato stocks this May 1, down 32 percent from a year ago and 20 percent below 1998. North Dakota’s stocks were off 52 percent from last year, Minnesota’s stocks dropped 35 percent, and Wisconsin’s stocks were down 23 percent. Michigan’s stocks were up 63 percent from a year ago and the Nebraska - Ohio combination was nearly triple last year.

Western States held 68.8 million cwt of potatoes in storage on May 1, 2000, up 4 percent from last year but 6 percent below 1998. Oregon’s stocks were up 36 percent from a year ago, Washington was equal to last year, and Idaho’s stocks were down 3 percent. Stocks in these three Northwest States were up 3 percent from last year and accounted for 70 percent of U. S. stocks. Colorado’s stocks were up 12 percent and California’s storage was up 22 percent from last year. Montana’s stocks, mostly seed, were up 3 percent.

